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expansion; in other words, the plant is established and the missionaries already hold strategic positions, beginning at the capital. They have a trained force already in the field and are ready to meet the new demand.

It is a significant fact that the missionary societies which, toward the beginning of the last century, began work in Turkey are those which preach, practice, and teach Christianity in its simplest form. They practice no ritual that cannot be changed to meet any new condition demanded by local circumstances. They use no pictures or images in their worship. Repeatedly thoughtful Mohammedans have said to the Protestants of Turkey that there is little difference between the Mohammedans and the Protestants, the only difference being that which gathers around the acceptance of Mohammed as the prophet of God and Jesus Christ as the redeemer of men. The position has already been reached in Turkey where Protestants and Mohammedans can calmly discuss the differences which separate them. The humanitarian measures carried out in Turkey during the last fifty years, and especially at times of great stress and strain, have demonstrated to the Moslems what true Christianity means. The Christian hospitals have been a mighty force to this end, and are now widely patronized by Moslems as well as Christians. All this has prepared the way for the new situation which must necessarily confront the Christian worker in that great empire and the church at home. Everything is ready for advance. The barriers between Moslems and Christians have been lowered, and in places are crumbling. It is a situation which demands the attention of the Christian world.

THE BEGINNINGS OF A NEW CATHOLIC UNITY

SHAILER MATHEWS
President of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America

A little less than sixteen hundred years ago the Council of Nicea undertook to give unity to a state religion. The sudden accession of the church to power after two centuries and more of persecution had resulted in theological acrimony that threatened the peace of the empire. The immediate result of the council was a creed which sought ecclesiastical unity through the use of terms which assured the exclusion of theological nonconformists. The ultimate result of the creed was beneficial, in that it sank deep into the heart of Christianity the indomitable belief that the salvation wrought by Christ was wrought by one who was very God of very God. None the less the council

confirmed the tendency of the ancient church to magnify metaphysical conformity over co-operation in the tasks of evangelism.

It is, of course, futile to attempt to rewrite history, but one can hardly avoid speculating as to what might have been the social development of Europe, if instead of discussions over consubstantiability the council had undertaken to christianize the institutions of the Greco-Roman civilization, and to evangelize the Germans and Arabs, who were so soon to inundate the empire. In such a case Europe might have been spared the Dark Ages and the triumphs of Mohammedanism.

Such speculation constantly intruded itself upon the mind of a student of history as he watched the proceedings of the second quadrennial meeting of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America at Chicago, December 4–9. Almost identically the same number of delegates were there as were at Nicea. They represented, however, instead of three, thirty tendencies of theological belief as represented by various denominations, whose membership numbered approximately seventeen million Protestant Christians. And this body, with the memory of hundreds of years of theological controversy, without the pressure of the state, advanced to another stage that co-operative Protestantism which is shaping up a catholic unity more promising even than that of the great council of 325. For it is the unity of the spirit and not of a definition.

This unity had been initially reached, it is true, by a constitution adopted four years ago, which made non-evangelical bodies ineligible to membership in the council, but even such exclusion was primarily one of strategy. Within the evangelical bodies unity has been reached, not by formulating a denatured platform from which no denomination would dissent. The council does not seek to confine religious co-operation to a minimum of theological assent, wherein can lie no enthusiasm. It frankly admits that it asks no denomination to abandon its history, its convictions, or its polity. Yet throughout all the meetings fraternity was in constant evidence. And this fraternity is all the more noteworthy because of the fact that in addition to the denominational differences there were those of geography and of race. So sincere was this desire to respect the feelings of opponents that even a reference to the temperance principles of Abraham Lincoln was supplemented by a reference to the similar principles of Robert E. Lee.

The unity of the council was essentially the unity of a spirit of devotion to the common task of making society into the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

The recognition of this great and dominating principle was charged with the enthusiasm for the social gospel that reached such a wonderful initial expression in the platform of the council of 1908. The report of the Commission on Social Service in 1912 is a document of no small significance and it voiced clearly a conception of Christianity as inevitably social. There was frank discussion of some of the recommendations of the report, but the chief desire of the council at this point seemed to be that the churches should regard social service not as an adjunct to Christianity but as a thing involved in Christianity

itself. Individuals were not forgotten, but social conditions were repeatedly shown as objects of Christian solicitude.

Furthermore, it was evident from the discussion that the new social spirit of the church is not satisfied by simply ameliorative effort. Cautious as were many of the delegates in specifying the method of the church's participation in social activity, there was unanimity in the belief that the church must stand not only for opposition to every form of ungodliness, but also for the regeneration of society as well as of individuals.

But the council kept steadily in view the religious function of the church. The discussion of the reports upon marriage, temperance, and Sunday observance, as well as the notable papers upon co-operation in foreign and home missions, indicated that even those delegates most devoted to the social aspects of the gospel see with increasing clarity that the real function of the church is something more than that of settlements, of the reform associations, or of the anti-vice leagues; it is primarily that of evoking and educating the spiritual life.

To many people, the most impressive single meeting, outside of the great mass meeting in the Olympic Theater where addresses were made by Dr. North and Professors Rauschenbusch and Steiner, was the session of Friday afternoon devoted to evangelism. It can hardly be doubted that the crest of the council's interest was reached in the conception of the supreme work of the church as that of actually transforming human lives through the gospel. And when at the close of the discussion, before the routine of business was again taken up, the council spontaneously passed into a season of prayer that the church might be strengthened for its great task, it was apparent that the ethical passion which so marked the newer conception of Christian unity has beneath it the thrust and power of an abiding trust in God. The new catholicism of Protestantism is aggressively evangelical. But it is the evangelicalism of Jesus rather than of the metaphysician.

It is difficult to estimate the influence which is to be exerted by this great meeting, but it is certainly to be great. The fact that it was composed of the most representative men on the official boards of the various denominations argues that it will increasingly help and inspire the co-operative policy of its various constituent bodies. In the action taken in favor of the reciprocal exchange of ministers among denominations in small towns, and in the insistence upon co-operation in home and foreign mission fields, there was recognized the fact that the beliefs in which the thirty denominations agree are vastly more important than the matters in which they differ. We have at last entered upon a period of Christian unity which frankly grants the right of freedom of thought and of theological expression—a unity of spirit rather than of repression, a unity which is among our Protestant churches a counterpart of that federal unity which we have in the United States of America. The various denominations are federated, not to reduce their own self-direction, but for co-operation in the work of saving men and women and christianizing the changing order.